

4600, Merrillville Community School

PROJECT ABSTRACT

The Merrillville Community School Corporation is applying for this competitive grant to be in a position to provide for our very diverse student population the electronic and digital tools through hardware and academic software to meet the challenges they face as students and future employees of the businesses in our community. The primary goal of our project is to provide academic software at the K-6 grade level to assist teachers and students to better meet their learning needs. It will also provide a unique opportunity to form a task force of teachers and administrators to carefully identify those academic software programs in language arts, mathematics, careers, social studies, and science that will enrich and remediate students in every aspect of their education at this critical age of development.

Merrillville Schools has secured local funding from to purchase computers to be placed in K-6 classrooms during the summer of 2009. Each classroom will have a 4 station Computer Pod available for student use. We believe that having Computer Pods in the classroom will provide more immediate access and improved student learning when compared to taking the class to the computer lab typically located at some distance from the teacher's classroom. We will also be purchasing document cameras for each elementary classroom that will allow teacher created materials to be shown on existing TVs installed in the classroom.

Merrillville Community Schools has invited Tri-Creek School Corporation (TCSC) to partner (collaborate) in this grant due to their two year experience of using Computer Pods in the classroom. Tri-Creek has also been using Moodle for four years and will host the Moodle server used for electronic collaboration between MCSC and TCSC teachers.

Goal of Proposal:

The goal of this proposal is four-fold:

- 1.) To research, evaluate, identify and purchase software to be used in the classroom computer pods and computer labs that will provide remediation and enrichment to students in mastering Indiana Academic Standards in core-subject areas.
- 2.) Create and provide ongoing professional development for teachers that will result in the creation of lesson plans and best practices for computer pods in the classroom.
- 3.) Provide ongoing Professional Development on the use of adopted elementary software for all levels of student learning (i.e. Special Needs, High Ability and Average Ability).
- 4.) Create and provide ongoing professional development for teachers on the use of the Document Cameras in the classroom.

In order to best use this new technology of Computer Pods in the Classroom, we need to choose and purchase appropriate software and innovative technologies to improve the operational efficiencies of learning support systems to facilitate student learning. We are also highly motivated to use appropriate software to help close the achievement gaps among student sub-groups who are disadvantaged.

Additionally we must develop lesson plans that will effectively integrate the technology into classroom instruction and provide differentiated instruction for both remedial and enrichment needs.

The summer of 2009 will be used to explore, evaluate and make decisions on the purchase of software to be used in computer labs and student computers in the classroom. Our initial intent is to select software that will give student, class and grade level reports.

In addition to creating remediation and enrichment for our mainstream students, a special emphasis is software to serve our special education population.

During the 2009-2010 school year we will provide professional development to teachers on how to successfully integrate technology into lesson plans using research based criteria.